

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 /096 W

-----051459Z 067646 /47

R 051200Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 889

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 1312

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SU, SO, YE, YS

SUBJECT: YAR PRESIDENT ON THE TAIZ SUMMIT CONFERENCE

BEGIN SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI, RECENT TAIZ SUMMIT CONFERENCE WAS A SUCCESS, DESPITE SOVIET EFFORTS TO CONTRARY. AL-HAMDI CONTINUED THAT THE SOMALIS NOW APPEAR TO BE PURSUING MODERATE POLICY VIS-A-VIS DJIBOUTI AS A RESULT OF THIS CONFERENCE. AL-HAMDI STATED IN ADDITION THAT ERITREAN PROBLEM WAS NOT DISCUSSED AT TAIZ AND NO FORMAL PDRY/YAR AGREEMENT VIS-A-VIS BAB AL-MANDEB EMERGED. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING APRIL 4 MEETING PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI DESCRIBED THE RECENT TAIZ SUMMIT CONFERENCE AS A SUCCESS, DESPITE MAJOR SOVIET EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT ITS FAILURE. AL-HAMDI STATED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD APPARENTLY WARNED BOTH THE ADEN AND MOGADISCIO REGIMES ABOUT THE "DANGERS" OF ATTENDING THIS CONFERENCE WHICH SEEMED TO BE INSPIRED BY "REACTIONARY
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ELEMENTS IN THE REGION". AL-HAMDI CONTINUED THAT THE SOVIETS FAILED BECAUSE IN ADDITION TO EFFORTS BY SUDANESE HE WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE THE ADENIS AND SOMALIS TO ATTEND DURING TELEPHONE CALLS WHICH HE MADE TO BOTH PRESIDENT SALIM RUBAYI ALI AND TO PRESIDENT BARRE. AL-HAMDI SAID THAT IN ADEN THERE WAS SERIOUS DIVISION WITHIN THE POLITBURO AS TO WHETHER OR NOT RUBAYI ALI SHOULD ACCEPT THE INVITA-

TION. THE SOMALI REGIME WAS ALSO SPLIT AND BARRE WAS UNDER STRONG PRESSURE NOT TO ATTEND, AS EVIDENCED BY THE LAST-MINUTE DECISION TO COME AFTER HAVING SAID NO. AL-HAMDI OPINED THAT IN THE END BOTH LEADERS ACCEPTED BECAUSE THEY REALIZED NON-ATTENDANCE WOULD HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT THEIR INCREASED ISOLATION FROM THE ARAB WORLD WHICH THE TWO STATES HAVE BEEN COURTING RECENTLY.

2. AL-HAMDI STATED THAT THE SOVIETS WERE QUITE CONCERNED ABOUT THE TAIZ SUMMIT BECAUSE THEY INTERPRETED IT AS BEING DIRECTED AGAINST ETHIOPIA AND INDIRECTLY AGAINST THEM. AL-HAMDI INTERJECTED TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE CONFERENCE WAS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST ANYONE BUT RATHER REPRESENTED A GENUINE REGIONAL EFFORT TO COORDINATE ON COMMON REGIONAL PROBLEMS. AL-HAMDI SAID THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR EVEN CAME TO TAIZ ON THE EVE OF THE CONFERENCE AND TRIED TO SEE HIM AS WELL AS OTHER HIGH-RANKING YEMENI GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BUT NO ONE RECEIVED HIM.

3. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONING, AL-HAMDI STATED THAT AS A RESULT OF THE CONFERENCE SOMALIS HAVE NOW "ALMOST" AGREED TO ACCEPT THE INDEPENDENCE OF DJIBOUTI BUT ON TWO CONDITIONS: (A) THAT VOTING ON THE REFERENDUM BE FREE AND ON THE BASIS OF ONE MAN -- ONE VOTE, AND (B) THAT ETHIOPIA MAKE NO HOSTILE MOVE AGAINST DJIBOUTI. AL-HAMDI THOUGHT THAT IF BOTH THESE CONDITIONS ARE MET, SOMALIA WILL AGREE TO THE INDEPENDENCE OF DJIBOUTI AND WILL ACCEPT GUARANTEES FOR ITS INDEPENDENCE.

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4. AGAIN IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONING, AL-HAMDI STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT THE ERITREAN PROBLEM WAS NOT DISCUSSED DURING THE MEETING AND THAT NO DECISION WAS MADE TO SUPPORT THE ERITREAN REBELLION. AL-HAMDI COMMENTED THAT AS FAR AS YEMEN IS CONCERNED, IT IS NOT SUPPORTING ANYONE IN ERITREA. AL-HAMDI CONTINUED THAT IF THE ERITREAN MOVEMENT IS STRONG ENOUGH IT WILL SUCCEED ON ITS OWN STRENGTH WITHOUT ANY NEED FOR SUPPORT FROM THE OUTSIDE. AL-HAMDI ADDED THAT HE WAS NOT CERTAIN THAT THE MOVEMENT WOULD SUCCEED, GIVEN THE ETHIOPIAN NEED FOR A SEAPORT ON THE RED SEA AS WELL AS ETHIOPIAN UNWILLINGNESS TO SIT BACK AND WATCH AND BREAK-UP OF THE COUNTRY.

5. AL-HAMDI WENT ON TO SAY IN RESPONSE TO MY FINAL QUESTION THAT THERE WERE NO AGREEMENTS BY PDRE OR YAR TO COORDINATE ON THE DEFENSE OF THE BAB AL-MANDEB. HE SAID EACH SIDE WILL, OF COURSE, WELCOME SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS TO STRENGTHEN THE DEFENSES IN THAT REGION SO THAT BAB AL-MANDEB CAN NEVER

BE USED AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF LITTORAL STATES.

6. COMMENT: AL-HAMDI WAS VERY CAREFUL NOT TO COMMIT THE SOMALIS ON THE QUESTION OF DJIBOUTI'S INDEPENDENCE. NONETHELESS, HE SEEMED CONFIDENT THAT THE SOMALIS ARE NOW PURSUING A MODERATE PATH RE DJIBOUTI BUT THAT IF THE SITUATION IN THE REGION BECOMES UNSTUCK IT WILL BE THE ETHIOPIANS WHO WILL HAVE TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.
SCOTES

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Message Attributes

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